

A Season Of Wonder Begins With The Returning Christmas Wonderland At Rock Springs Park

by Stephanie Tate

November 17 2022 9:40 AM



ALTON - It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas in Alton's Rock Springs Park as the annual Christmas Wonderland light display prepares to open for the season on Friday, Nov. 25.

Christmas Wonderland will be open nightly from November 25 through December 27. The park is located at 2100 College Ave, in Alton. Hours are Monday through Friday from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m.; Saturday and Sunday from 5 p.m. to 9 p.m.

Over the last three months, the Grandpa Gang, a group of retired volunteers, has been busy hanging lights and counting down to the opening day of Christmas Wonderland. More than 4 million lights will twinkle against the beautiful backdrop of Rock Springs Park, lighting the way toward another illuminating holiday season.

Returning this year to Christmas Wonderland will be the annual walk-through event set for Monday, Nov. 28. People are allowed to walk through the park during the evening to enjoy the lights. Admission for the walk-through is \$1 per person. The popular Enchanted Forest will also be open this year for visitors. Holiday trees are decorated by community organizations, schools, and scout groups. Visitors to the park vote on their favorite and the organization's tree with the most votes receives a cash prize.

Santa will once again be back at the Santa House. Family members are encouraged to take their own photos with Santa at no charge.

"We are looking forward to welcoming people to Christmas Wonderland again this year," said head Grandpa Dick Alford. "The Grandpa Gang has worked hard to prepare the park and I think people are going to enjoy the experience."

The Grandpa Gang organizes and designs the Christmas spectacular of cascading lights, tunnels, and displays known as Christmas Wonderland. Each evening, the park sparkles against the night sky with millions of glistening lights, all hung by volunteers and the "gang."

Christmas Wonderland warms the hearts and helps families and friends capture the holiday spirit. Each year, the Grandpa Gang takes time to give back to the community with a portion of the attraction's seasonal revenue donated to local charities. In 2021, the Grandpa Gang awarded over 53 grants to local organizations, totaling nearly \$50,000.

Every night visitors can turn off their car headlights and let the holiday displays carry them through the magical scene of Christmas Wonderland. Returning light displays include Disney's Frozen, an updated Snoopy display, and the 12 Days of Christmas. Even a few of Alton's historical figures visit, including displays of Robert Wadlow, the World's Tallest Man, placing the star on the Christmas tree and the legendary Piasa Bird carrying a bag of gifts for the kids are featured.

Admission to Christmas Wonderland is a suggested donation of \$7 for cars and small vans or \$1 per person for vehicles holding more than 10 people. For more information on Christmas Wonderland, call 1-800-258-6645, or go to www.christmaswonderlandalton.com.